

Children and families talk for Sunday 5th March 2023

Hello everyone!

You've caught me in the middle of getting ready for an adventure! I'm packing a rucksack. I have no idea where I'm going yet, or quite when, so I'm packing all sorts of things. I may need this torch if I stay out late and it gets dark. I may need a coat and a blanket if its cold or wet. Then again, I may need my swimsuit and a towel.

Have you ever packed for a journey but not known what to expect? Perhaps you're like me and you like surprises, or perhaps you prefer to know what will happen in advance. Sometimes in life we have to step outside of what we know, our comfort zone, and take things on trust.

This is what our bible story today is about – and it's about a man Jesus met called Nicodemus. You can read about him in John chapter 3 verses 1-17.

Nicodemus was one of the Jewish religious leaders and a Pharisee. He came to speak to Jesus after dark one evening – I guess he didn't want others to see who he was talking to, and he was really interested to hear what Jesus had to say.

N: Hello teacher, we all know that God has sent you to teach us. We've seen you do miracles and this proves God is with you.

J: I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.

N: What do you mean? How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?

J: I'm telling you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit!

When Jesus talked about water and the Spirit, he may have used water as an example of childbirth and the Spirit as the Spiritual rebirth we have when we become Christians. The water may also represent the act of Baptism we have when we become Christians, as Jesus himself was baptised in water by John the Baptist. We think of water as a cleaning agent, and so the act of Baptism becomes an act of cleaning away the wrong as we accept the Holy Spirit and give our lives to God.

But Jesus and Nicodemus' conversation didn't end there;

J: Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again'. The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit.

N: How are these things possible?

J: You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don't understand these things? I assure you; we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won't believe what we are saying. But if you don't believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from Heaven. And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.

Jesus explained that just as we cannot control the wind, we also cannot control the work of the Holy Spirit, which works in ways that we cannot understand. Believing does not always mean understanding everything, we have to have faith. When the Israelites were wandering in the desert with Moses, there was a plague of snakes, but God asked his people to show their faith in him by looking up at a bronze snake on a pole, those who had been bitten and looked at the snake, were healed. You can find this story in Numbers chapter 21, verses 8 and 9. Just as the people of Israelite looked up at the bronze snake, Jesus says, if we look up to Him and believe in Him, we too will be saved.

Then Jesus continued:

J: For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not die but have everlasting life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world but to save the world through him.

These last verses are what we as Christians base our faith on. If you only ever remember one bible verse, remember this one: John 3 verse 16. Here is another way of looking at it, put your name in the blank spaces: **For God loved _____ so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that if _____ believes in him _____ will not die but have everlasting life.**

If you want to, you could write that out and put it somewhere you will read it everyday to remind you of God's promise to those of us who believe in Him.

Let's talk to God now:

Lord God,
our walk with you is not counted in miles,
but by our faithfulness to you.
Give us ears to hear you call,
and feet to follow as you lead us into new things.
Amen.

And let's say the grace together:

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
The love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
Be with us all, now and forever more,
Amen.

Here is the children's activity page from Roots: [activity-sheet-5-march-2023.pdf](https://rootsontheweb.com/activity-sheet-5-march-2023.pdf)
(rootsontheweb.com)